34-1944

WHITE MAN'S VIEWS

Courier Pittsburgh, Pa. 10-21-44

Hal Styles, a Klansman, Deceived His Friends For Political Office

By LE BERTHON

(The views expressed in this column are those of the writer and do not necessarily express the editorial opinion of The Pittsburgh Courier.—The Editors.)

POLITICS has had many fantastic episodes, but the Hal Styles case in California tops most. Styles defeated Congressman John Costello, incumbent and Dies committee member, for the Democratic nomination, and was then opposed by Gordon McDonough, Republican, for election to Congress from the 15th California Congressional District.

Early this month, the Hearst papers in Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Times broke sensational stories that Styles, a radio commentator who has been in recent times an outstanding champion of full equal rights for Negroes, had a dark past as a Klansman who had become an Exalted Cyclops and a Kleagle in the late 1920s.

Mr. Le Berthon

For several days after that, Styles made very evasive and unconvincing statements over his radio program and to very jittery Democratic committee members, but insisted "the whole truth" would be told at the proper time.

"JOINED TO EXPOSE KLAN"

THEN, one morning, the Los Angeles Daily News broke a story that Styles had joined the Klan to expose it. In support of this, it ran a photostatic copy of the first few paragraphs of a Klan expose by Harry J. Styles, Exalted Cyclops of Major Emmet D. Smith Klan No. 38 of Jamaica, N. Y., that was announced as first of a 10-article series in the New York Graphic of August 30, 1930.

HEARST PAPERS WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

The Daily News also ran a statement by Walter Winchell, who ran a movie column in the Graphic in 1930, that Styles had joined the Klan as an undercover Graphic reporter. Winchell also accused his radio sponsor's advertising agency of refusing to let him tell the facts about Styles over the air. Winchell's statement also was carried by PM and the New York Post.

OBVIOUSLY, neither the Hearst papers nor the Los Angeles Times was interested in shielding the voters from an ex-Klansman. Neither, in quoting some Southern politician who was blasting at the New Deal, FDR, "Eleanor" and the CIO, ever inquired into the possible Klan past of such a politician, or observed that he had the same outlook anyhow as a Klansman. Styles was endorsed by labor, including the CIO Political Action committee. It was transparent that the Hearst papers and the Times were politically motivated.

It also looked as if those papers had deliberately failed to mention that Styles had quite courageously exposed the Klan.

"ACCEPTED OFFICE TO GET ON INSIDE"

Styles assured all his backers, including me, that nine other articles in his 1930 Graphic series would bear out his statement and Winchell's that he had joined the Klan merely to expose it. He said he had never believed in the Klan and had never sought to advance its cause. He had accepted the Cyclops and Kleagle elections, he told us, in order to penetrate into the inner circles.

We took his word. For we had told him that if he had joined the Klan in his younger life and would admit it, we would still stand by him. For Christian redemption would be a mockery unless we conceded that a man could change. But he insisted he had never believed in the Klan.

KNEW STYLES WELL

I knew Styles as a fellow Catholic, who had once "married out of the Church," but had been divorced, and had wed his present young and beautiful wife a year ago in Hollywood's Blessed Sacrament church, the Rev. C. J. McCoy, S.J., officiating. I knew that two of his three children were attending Catholic educational institutions.

ALSO, I knew his radio championing of organized labor, Catholic education and full and equal rights for Negroes. I'd heard his denunciations of anti-Semitism. He was instrumental this spring in getting me on the air for 13 weeks on a program called "National Unity Through Interracial Justice."

PROOF SHOWS STYLES A REAL KLANSMAN

Taking his word that he had never believed in the Klan, I addressed Catholic, Negro and Jewish groups in his behalf. I wrote three articles accepting his side of the whole thing. He let me do it. And then one day I got a telephone call to meet a friend and go to the Hollywood Democratic Committee offices, as photostatic copies of the other nine articles from Styles' 1930 Graphic expose' of the Klan had arrived from New York.

READING them, I became heart sick. For Styles had written, in great detail, of how he had come to join the Klan. He gave names and dates and places. And he did not write in the Graphic that he had joined to expose the Klan. He wrote that he joined it, and was in it six years, because, as "a foolish idealist," he, Styles, "saw it all as the struggle for white supremacy!"

STYLES LIED TO FRIENDS

He wrote in detail of his organizing work, of being "a thorough Klansman" and of being "imbued with the spirit" of the Klan, and that a sort of "weird madness" had been upon him. He wrote of how proud he was when he was made an Exalted Cyclops, and how he was "overwhelmed" when he was made a Kleagle.

The Hearst papers, I learned, also have photostatic copies of all this, and are "laying" to run the damning material close to election day.

IN short, Styles lied to the Democratic committeemen and to personal friends, all willing to have forgiven him had he said he had been a believing Klansman once, but had seen the folly of it all. He let me write articles and make talks in his behalf that would ultimately backfire, make me ridiculous, and cast doubts on my veracity and integrity.

Since I informed him of having seen the Graphic articles, he has been lamely and unconvincingly making half-way admissions over the radio of having once been a sure-enough Klansman. I think he hated to admit it to his young wife, his fellow Catholics, his Jewish and Negro friends, and his children. But was this understandable vanity any excuse for making fools of his friends? And his party?

Ku Klux Klan, Empire of Hooded Men, Dead At Last

Kansas City Call — Kansas City, Mo. 6-23-44

BY FRANK McCALLISTER

(As Southern Secretary of the WDL, Frank McCallister for years led a vigorous fight against the KKK, which began in 1935 with the Klan murder of Joseph Shoemaker, Tampa, Fla. While the Klan murderers never served a day in jail, some of the suspects committed suicide under the spotlight of the vigorous campaign for justice which Frank McCallister led).

ATLANTA. — The Invisible has disappeared! The Imperial Wizard has stepped down from the throne. Cyclops, Kleagles, Kludds, Kladds, giants, genii, Nighthawks and terrors have silently folded their dirty, bloodstained sheets and hoods and sorrowfully abandoned their lash and tar bucket.

In brief, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan have officially ceased to exist.

This disclosure was made by Fred D. Moon, City Editor, Atlanta Journal, in a copyrighted article in the Sunday Journal, June 4.

National headquarters of the Klan are closed and empty.

The Imperial Wizard, James A. Colescutt, former horse doctor, has sold his Atlanta home and moved to Miami.

Colescutt disclosed to Moon over the telephone that suspension of the hooded order was unanimously voted at a secret Klonvocation at the Henry Grand hotel, Atlanta, April 23. Officials came for this meeting from as far away as Texas, Oregon and California.

Grew From 1915 to 1927

Rumors have been current for some time that Uncle Sam had demanded that the Klan pay some $600,000 in corporate taxes for the period from 1915 to 1927.

During this period the Ku Klux Klan gained its peak strength. Powerful enough to control elections in many states in the South and Middle West, it attracted hundreds of public officials who winked at the violence and depredations committed by the wrecking crews.

The decline set in around 1928. There was never really a successful comeback but efforts were made at revival around a campaign to fight unionization, especially in the South.

Evidence was made public by the Workers Defense League that textile mill owners in Georgia and South Carolina had contributed funds to the Ku Klux Klan to finance a display of violence against union organizers. Fiery crosses were burned in front of Union Meeting halls. Organizers were abducted and beaten by hooded thugs.

The Klan was widely credited with kidnapping and killing Frank Norman, citrue worker organizer in Lakeland, Fla., during the early thirties.

Their Downfall

Perhaps the most sensational exploit of the Klan which hastened its ultimate downfall was the terror in Tampa, Fla., in 1935, resulting in the torture death of Joseph Shoemaker, a crime for which five Tampa Ku Klux cops were convicted but later freed by a State Supreme Court ruling. The Workers Defense League was organized as a result of this case and similar acts of terror against labor.

Further set-backs which gave the death-blow to the Klan were successful prosecution of flogging crews in Fulton County, Ga., and a joint meeting which the Klan held in New Jersey with the Nazi Bund.

Ten men, several of them deputy sheriffs, were convicted of being members of a whipping gang in East Point, Ga., accused of beating scores of Negroes, Union organizers and men charged with moral delinquency.

Colescutt said that suspension of the terroristic order does not mean that the Klan is dead. He stated that the effect of the decision was to release all local chapters from all obligations, financial and otherwise, to the imperial headquarters.

Functions Are Suspended

Colescutt declared: "I am still Imperial Wizard. The other officials still retain their titles, although, of course, the functions of all of us are suspended. We have authority to meet and reincarnate any time. Lots of people tell us that the Klan is needed now more than ever in its history. I do not know what we will do. Any further action will depend upon leaders who compose our government."

Many students of the current situation in the South believe that the Klan will be succeeded by a new streamlined organization based on the same principles and agitating primarily for maintenance of "White Supremacy" with action taken against Negroes who have the temerity to present themselves at the polls in the Democratic primaries.

Already many Kluxers have joined the Keystone society, newly formed "patriotic society."

In addition, Eugene Talmadge has an organization called Vigilantes Inc., which he is hoping will catch on.

The Klan is dead but the fight for democracy and decency has just begun.

34-1944

Author of New Book Says Ku Klux Klan Is Lying in Wait to Rob Negro of Job

Call — Kansas City, Mo.
11-3-44

WASHINGTON, D.C.—(NNPA)— That the Ku Klux Klan is lying in wait to rob the Negro of his vote and his job is pointed out in an article written by Bernice Scarr in a release by the Workers Defense League. In it she says:

"The forces of reaction, supercharged by the uncanny organization of the Ku Klux Klan, reported to be disbanded, are lying in wait for the war's end, ready to set into operation a well coordinated plan not only to rob the Negro of his vote but of his job, according to Stetson Kennedy, author of the forthcoming book, 'The Four Freedoms Down South.' The early phase of their program has already begun.

"Imperial Wizard James A. Colescott, in answer to a query by Kennedy, said himself 'The Klan did not dissolve nor has it assumed any new name.'

"While the order's constitutional laws were suspended and the charter of local clans revoked, the Wizard emphasized, 'This does not mean that the Klan is dead. We have authority to meet and reincarnate at any time.'"

Organization Under Different Names

The pretense of disbanding which the Klan has used is the same kind of trickery which it practiced in 1896 when the Klan's first Wizard, Nathan Bedford Forrest, fearful of Federal prosecution for treason, issued an edict abolishing the Klan 'forever.' 11-3-44

Instead of obeying the edict, the local dens grew more violent, some of them assuming new names such as "The Pale Faces," the "White Brotherhood," and the "Knights of the White Camelia."

Kennedy warns that Colescott, the current Wizard, plans to ape the work of Wizard William Joseph Simmons, who in 1915 reincarnated the dormant Klan until it reached a membership of 5,100,000, and then capitalized upon Post-World-War frictions.

The record of the Klan since 1932, when Colescott succeeded Hiram K. Evans as Imperial Wizard, has been one of deceitful hypocrisy. "While professing opposition to all forms of intimidation, Colescott has sanctioned Klan parades through Negro districts, the publication of 'want ads' for Klansmen ('There is Work to Do') and the distribution of intimidatory leaflets ('The KKK Is Watching You!) on the eve of NIRB elections, etc. 11-3-44

"For some time, however, there have been unmistakable signs of restiveness within the Invisible Empire against Colescott's mild form of restraint, with the wizard himself admitting that state kleagles have accused him of 'selling out to the Jews.' Most ominously, Nightshirt Charlie Speer, former Michigan Kleagle, has led Detroit Klansmen out of the Invisible Empire and into the more terroristic United Sons of America; while in Atlanta, the recently organized Fact Finders have verbally attacked both Negroes and Jews, and charged the klan with 'lying down on the job,' Kennedy reports.

"Moreover, the warnings by some Southern governors and Congressmen that 'ways and means' will be found to keep the Democratic party lily-white in the South (despite the Supreme court decision admitting Negroes to Texas Democratic primaries) are further evidence of the powerful forces impelling Klansmen to unlawful violence," he adds.

The determination to suppress the Negro political voice was reiterated several days ago by Louisiana's Senator Overton, nominee for the senate of the Democratic party. He assured apprehensive white voters in his recent speech that 'legal measures will eventually bar the Negro from voting in Democratic white primaries in the south.' 11-3-44

The future of White Supremacy is being closely guarded by such men as John H. Bankhead of Alabama, who, in his endorsement of the reelection of Lister Hill to the Senate, says in doubtful praise, "He has the Southerner's attitude on issues that are important to our people, ESPECIALLY WHITE SUPREMACY.'

And in the meantime, Negroes are not being divested of their political rights, but they are being turned out of their jobs, as white labor becomes more plentiful. In Memphis' largest department store, eight Negro women, elevator operators, have been given notice that their services would no longer be needed while on the same day, the store inserted an advertisement seeking white operators and offering them $18 weekly when the Negro women had only been paid $12.

And even the Negro who keeps his job is threatened by the long arm of the reactionary conspiracy. In Fort-Lauderdale, Fla., 49 Negroes were arrested and fined without proper trial in a so-called attempt to discourage idleness, yet an investigation by the Workers Defense League that about half the Negroes ar resetd were regularly employed as stevedores at Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale's harbor. 11-3-44

Rev. Aron S. Gilmartin of New York, national chairman of the Workers Defense League said, the enforces labor decree 'seems to be part of a general attempt to have Negroes continue working at the same menial tasks they had before the war—if they are to be allowed to work at all.

The Klan's New Act

Age — New York, N.Y.

From Atlanta comes the news that the Ku-Klux Klan has disbanded as a national body; that the Klan's national headquarters in that city are vacant, and that James A. Colescott, who has enjoyed the title and perquisites of imperial wizard, has sold his home and departed. But, before indulging in any celebration, we would advise caution and a certain amount of skepticism—precisely as in the case of the recent terminological legerdemain performed by the Communist party in the United States. 6-17-44

Mr. Colescott is quoted as saying that he is still imperial wizard; if there is any wizarding to be done, presumably Mr. C. will be on hand to do it. Local chapters, he says, have been released from all obligations to headquarters. Everybody, down to the lowliest hot-eyed and chinless kleagle, retains his title, although "all functions are suspended"—whatever that means. "We have authority," says the imperial wizard, "to meet and reincarnate at any time." All this flummery, he says, does not mean that the Klan is dead. 6-17-44

We prefer to take Wizard Colescott's word on this. It would be safe to bet all the pillow slips from the Okefenokee to the Brazos that the Klan is not dead. Droopy, perhaps, Short on funds, probably. Temporarily out of issues maybe. But so long as men like Colescott and his preposterous predecessors, Wizards Simmons and Evans, are at large, the spirit of the Klan will be in the land. True, the attempt to revive the Klan from its decline after the boom times of the 1920's, when it claimed 5,00,000 members has not been notably successful. Too many men who had been taken in during those days looked back with a sort of shamefaced wonderment at their earlier foolishness. But a nucleus remained, enough to gladden the eye of any promoter—and when you scratch a wizard you find a promoter.

Therefore, withhold the cheers for a time. The boys will be back, not necessarily in bedsheets and with flaming torches—but back the minute pay dirt shows again. 6-17-44

THE KU KLUX KLAN IS DEAD, BUT THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY AND DECENCY HAS JUST REALLY BEGUN

Age New York, N.Y.
6-17-44

By FRANK McCALLISTER
(Southern Secretary of the NDL)

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Decline Began in 1928

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The Klan's Post-War Plans

Pittsburgh Courier - Pa.

According to reports from Atlanta, headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan, Imperial Wizard James Colescott is preparing to revive the hooded order as soon as peace comes.

Imperial Wizard Colescott has been "on the spot" for some time with large elements of the Klan, which have accused him of "laying down on the job" because he soft-pedaled Negro-baiting and hobnobbed with Catholics.

11-25-44

Aroused by these charges, the Imperial Wizard has begun distributing hate literature (?) in a dozen States, and his terrorist organization is taking credit for the new Florida and Arkansas anti-union laws.

Says Colescott, "The Klan did not dissolve nor has it assumed any new name. Although the KKK's constitutional laws were suspended and the charter of the local Klans revoked, this does not mean that the Klan is dead. We have authority to meet and reincarnate at any time."

With talk of victory abroad, the Klan now feels that the time for reincarnation is at hand, and we may look forward to an intensive drive for suckers at ten dollars a throw to swell the ranks of the organization, and a revival of the terroristic tactics that won five million morons after the last war.

But the coming post-war period is not going to be like the last one.

For one thing, Americans are neither as emotional nor prejudiced as they were in the early 1920's, and therefore not as susceptible to racist propaganda as they were then.

For another thing, colored Americans are not going to be nearly as easily cowed as they were before . . . and they were none too easily cowed then.

A new spirit is abroad both among colored and white Americans, and it is the spirit of unity through understanding derived from common sacrifice.

This is not to say that there will be no racial conflicts after this war, but Negroes will face the issue with less fear and more courage, and they will have a larger percentage of white people on their side.

The Ku Klux Klan may be revived, but it will find the going much rougher than it was a quarter century ago.

Atlantans Form Successor Of KKK

Defender - Chicago, Ill. 5-27-44

ATLANTA. — (ANP) — A new hate group, apparently designed to take the place of the defunct Ku Klux Klan, came into being here Wednesday night with the meeting of a group of white Atlantans at a Masonic hall in Buckhead, an Atlanta suburb.

The leader of the group, an Atlanta bus driver, in calling the meeting to order delivered a bitter harangue against a number of white Atlanta ministers, whom he charged with "sinister motives," because they allegedly were trying to "give a fair break to the Negro and the Jew."

Violence against Jewish and Negro minorities was urged by another speaker, who also attacked the Ku Klux Klan for "disbanding at a time when most needed."

The name of the new group, it was said, will be the Fact Finders. There was an urgent invitation to join at $6 per membership, of which the promoters were to get a large cut. The Masonic order disclaimed any connection with the meeting, and building committee members asserted they had no knowledge that violence would be advocated. The Wednesday night meeting was open to the public, but it was announced that all future gatherings will be "secret."

Wisconsin Prof Fears Rise of Ku Klux Klan After War

Call - Kansas City, Mo.

11-17-44

Says Something Must Be Done To Halt Trend

NEW YORK. — Fear that the Ku Klux Klan may be revived after the war was expressed by Dr. H. Scudder Mckeel, associate professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, at a meeting of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene here last week.

11-17-44

He said that it is necessary to take measures immediately to counteract the rising tide of race prejudice in this country which is "definitely associated with reactionary, illiberal and conservative thinking on social, economic and political subjects."

He said that while the cradle is the best place to begin improving race relations, a short-term program must be set up at once because of danger of the rise of either the Klan or a similar hate organization under a different name.

"We should publicize the dangers to the public peace and to the rights of certain of our citizens in the formation of hate organizations that parade falsely in the name of nationalism," Dr. Mckeel said.

Possibility of Revival

"That the imminent creation of such an organization, or the revival in full force of the Ku Klux Klan, is a real possibility, we have only to look at our history. Within the last hundred years there have been three nation-wide organizations that threatened our internal peace and security—the Know Nothings in the decade preceding the Civil War, the American Protective Association before the Spanish American War and the second Ku Klux Klan after the first World War.

"The spearhead of the first two was anti-Catholicism, an unfortunate early American heritage that is still with us. The spearhead of the third, the second Ku Klux Klan, was and is triple-pronged—anti-Catholic, anti-Negro and anti-Jew.

11-17-44

"Each one of these three has been stronger than the one before and has been able to attract more adherents. So far we have not had a hate and super-nationalist organization that combined with prejudice a definite ideology to apply to government. However, the world trend of such prejudice movements, as we see in Germany, is to embody an ideology. We may get such a development here the next time.

"It will not be called fascism, because that term is in disrepute. But the tendencies toward reaction, of course, are much older than the word fascism. With the close association of race prejudice with illiberal ideas, we could not get any other type of ideology than one which would stop change toward a better world. The world is now too small for such development to be merely our domestic concern. What we do among ourselves has repercussions on the rest of the world.

Position of Whites in World

"Those of us who are white are having, and so far wasting, our last chance to be accepted on an equal basis with the other peoples of a world which is two-thirds colored. The 300-year advantage we had through the industrial revolution is coming to a close as the remainder of the world becomes industrialized and capable of producing modern weapons of war.

11-17-44

"Let us all work to stem the tide of hate before the most susceptible among us are swept into the stream. In addition to publicizing the character of the hate groups we have had and what they do, we should try more experiments like the one now being talked about in Springfield, Mass. There, particularly through the school system, people have made a concerted effort toward better understanding of one another."

At the Mental Hygiene meeting, the Lasker award for $1,000 was awarded to Col. William C. Menninger, chief consultant in neuropsychiatry, Office of the Army Surgeon General. Dr. Menninger was with the Menninger clinic in Topeka, Kas., before joining the army.

34-1944

Klan Disbands as National Body; Claimed 5,000,000 Roll in 1920s

Times-Newyork, N.Y.
6-5-44

By The Associated Press.

ATLANTA, June 4—The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, a hooded order which in the early Nineteen Twenties claimed 5,100,000 members, has disbanded as a national group, The Atlanta Journal said last night.

In a copyrighted story, the journal said the Klan's national headquarters here was vacant and that James A. Colescott, Imperial Wizard, had sold his home and left the city.

The journal said it reached Colescott by telephone, and quoted him as saying the suspension was decided on at a Klanvocation (convention) held secretly in Atlanta on April 23. This gathering, the paper quoted Colescott as saying, "voted to suspend the constitutional laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., to revoke all charters Klans and to order disbandment of all provisional Klans."

However, Colescott told the paper:

"This does not mean that the Klan is dead. We simply have released local chapters from all obligations, financial and otherwise, to the Imperial Headquarters. I still am Imperial Wizard. The other officials still retain their titles, although, of course, the functions of all of us are suspended. We have authority to meet and reincarnate at any time."

The Klan began to decline in the late 1920's. The "Imperial Palace" was sold to the Catholic Church as the site of a cathedral in 1938, and the old Klan Office Building, last of the order's once-extensive real estate holdings, was sold in 1943 for conversion into a war-housing unit.

Colescott became Imperial Wizard in 1938, succeeding Dr. Hiram W. Evans, former Dallas dentist who had headed the order since 1922. He said the reason for disbandment was approved by all Klan members, and added:

"I do not regard it as a subject for discussion outside the Klan."

Virtually dormant since 1928, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan flourished from 1920 to 1925 and created a sensation. Their slogan of "native, white, Protestant" supremacy found favor among the nationalistic, Red-baiting, alien-hating elements of the United States, and more than 5,000,000 persons joined the secret organization. 6-5-44

Its rapid growth contributed to its eventual downfall, for popular interest precipitated a Congressional investigation and newspaper exposures of its terroristic methods hastened its decline.

Politicians, too, inadvertently contributed to its disappearance from the American scene. Using the Klan's ready-made political machinery to hoist themselves into office, particularly in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Maine, Kansas and Indiana, their corrupt administrations did much to discredit the order.

Patterned after the original Ku Klux Klan which flourished in the Reconstruction period, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was formed in 1915 by William J. Simmons, a preacher, traveling salesman and promoter of fraternal orders. Corporate rights were granted by the State of Georgia and thus legally established, Simmons shouted his aims: "white supremacy, real patriotism and pure Americanism." He emphasized, too, the sacred duty of protecting womanhood.

The order grew slowly until 1920 when Simmons brought in an advertising man, E. Y. Clarke, and Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor, a publicist. Adopting techniques to fit the region in which they were working, the Klan members, masked and hooded in white robes, brought meetings to a climax under the blaze of a fiery cross in the open country. 6-5-44

The group attained its greatest strength under Dr. Hiram Evans. Boycott of those inimical to its aims displaced violence, and interest centered in acquiring political power. The group gained somewhat regionally and played a role in the national elections of 1924 and 1928.

Its death was hastened when the United States Supreme Court in November, 1928, upheld a New York State law enacted five years earlier which required all but labor unions and benevolent organizations to give publicity to their regulations, oaths and memberships.

The Klan Is Dead

News-Birmingham, Ala.

By its own action, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan has disbanded as a national organization. For reasons that its former officials would not disclose, the imperial headquarters has closed its books, suspended all activity and declared itself dissolved. 6-7-44

The public is entitled to guess at the reason. One guess would be that the good sense of the public finally made itself felt upon an organization founded on prejudice, nourished by fear, and sprouting hate. Another guess would be the realization that a secret, hooded organization of that kind has no place among American people.

But the Klan is dead. May its spirit die also.

A LESSON FROM THE KLAN

The Ku Klux Klan has officially disbanded as a national organization. The imperial wizard informed The Atlanta Constitution that the action was approved by the members, but the reason is not set forth, as the wizard does not "regard it as a subject for discussion outside the Klan."

News-Birmingham, Ala.

The history of the hooded order constitutes a fantastic, although disgraceful, scene in the national drama. Its claims of more than 5,000,000 members in the early 1920s were probably not exaggerated. It spread far beyond the South and great parades of ghost-like men concealed in sheets and hoods passed through the streets of cities while burning crosses symbolized their zeal.

The Klan as a domestic influence has long been negligible. The causes of its fall are not difficult to find. At its height the professional leaders rolled in the wealth of dues, and the organization was riddled by graft and folly. However, no one dares conclude that the racial and religious hatreds which it propagated have been stamped out by dissolution of the national order. The Klan did not implant bigotry in the hearts of members. It was the other way round. The organization grew from existing sentiments. 6-29-44

At home we have the duty to keep watch lest similar fanaticism grow out of ignorance and weld into a political unit. The history of the Klan may be significant for the postwar period. It should be clear that the Nazi party of Germany did not impose its barbarism on the German mind, but grew out of it.

Therefore, we must stand guard against those people who will be pleading for a quick and moderate peace on the argument that as soon as the Hitler party is destroyed nazism will have been eradicated from the earth. Both it and the Klan must inevitably rise again unless the roots are destroyed.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Klan Clutches

Newsweek-Dayton, Ohio

Hardly had Imperial Wizard James A. Colescott announced the dissolution of the Ku Klux Klan—kladds, kludds, cyclops, genii, grand dragons and all—when the secret order reared its hood in a state where once it held both political parties in complete thrall: Indiana. 6-26-44

Last week, just eleven days after he was elected Republican National Committeeman, Robert W. Lyons, tax attorney, GOP power, and the state's outstanding Dewey worker, resigned under party pressure. Reason: his past record as Klan state treasurer and organizer. Lyons exacted as the price of his resignation a secret ballot on the GOP state delegation's Presidential preference. Results: 26 for Dewey, 2 refusing to vote, 1 absent.

As Indiana Republicans thus averted the threat of a Klan issue in their coming bid for power, Indiana Democrats also acted fast. Sen. Samuel D. Jackson, their gubernatorial candidate, volunteered: "I am not and have never been a member of the Klan. Indeed, the Klan successfully opposed me when I was the Democratic nominee for Congress in 1928."

KKK And Nazi Bund Linked

Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.

WASHINGTON— (ANP)— The Ku Klux Klan and the German-American bund are closely connected, witnesses declared as they represented documents and pictures at the mass sedition trial last week. President Roosevelt is of Jewish ancestry, some of the witnesses claimed. 7-23-44

According to William Luedtke, former national secretary of the bund, the two groups had met in joint session at a bund camp in New Jersey. He said he could recognize pictures of at least two Klan leaders in photographs of the meeting. The meeting, Luedtke said, was held at Camp Nordland, N. J., in 1940.

The joint session, he declared, was arranged by Edward James Symthe and August Klapprott, is a former bund leader.

The defendants are being tried for their connection with an alleged conspiracy to undermine the morale of the armed forces.

Substitute For Klan Is Organized

ATLANTA — (ANP) — A new hate group apparently designed to take the place of the defunct Ku Klux Klan came into being here Wednesday night with the meeting of a group of white Atlantans at a Masonic hall in Buckhead, an Atlanta suburb.

The leader of the group, an Atlanta bus driver, in calling the meeting to order delivered a bitter harangue against a number of white Atlanta ministers, whom he charged with "sinister motives," because they allegedly were trying to "give a fair break to the Negro and the Jew."

Violence against Jewish and Negro minorities was urged by another speaker, who also attacked the Ku Klux Klan for "disbanding at a time when most needed."

Rapped By Daily

The Atlanta Constitution editorially took issue with the new organization, asserting, "'Atlanta and Georgia do not need another of these 'secret' organizations which are instigated to make money for a few and to play on the prejudices and ignorances of the rabble. Our courts and law enforcement officers are fully capable of protecting us. We don't need these big, brave men, who are trying to sell memberships for $6 each. . . . . a full $5 of which goes into the pocket of the local feuhrer."

Ku Klux Klan Ceases Activities As National Order; Once Boasted Of Membership Of Over 5 Million

Age-Herald, New York, N.Y.
6-10-44

ATLANTA, Ga. — In a copyrighted story of Fred D. Moon, city editor, The Atlanta Journal on Sunday said that the K. K. K., the hooded order which in the early 1920's listed over five million members, has disbanded as a national group.

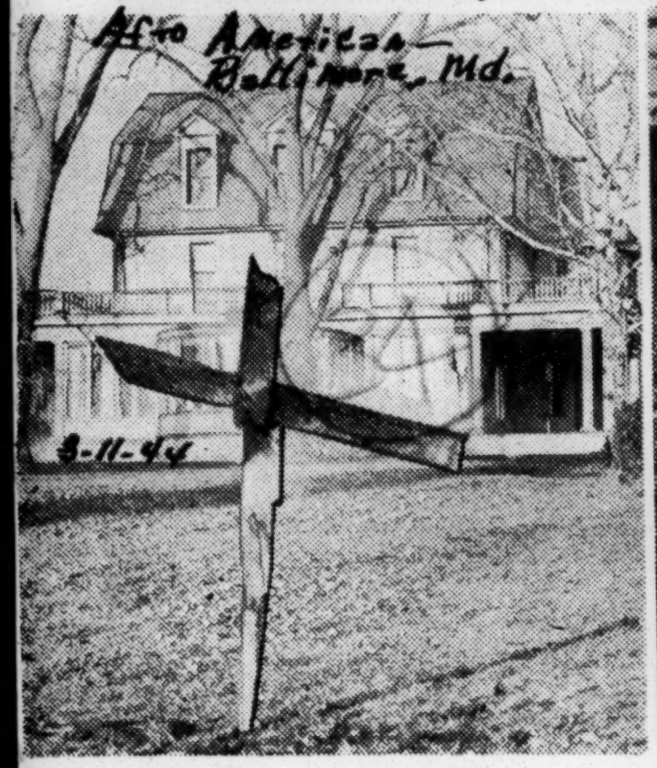
The Journal said that the Ku Klux Klan's Atlanta headquarters were vacant, and James A. Colescott, imperial wizard, had sold his home and left the city.

The newspaper said it reached Colescott by telephone, and quoted him as saying the suspension was decided on at a Klanvocation (convention) which was held secretly in Atlanta on April 23. This gathering, the paper quoted Colescott as saying, "voted to suspend the constitutional laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., to revoke all charter Klans and to order disbandment of all provisional Klans."

However, Colescott told the paper: "This does not mean the Klan is dead. We simply have released local chapters from all obligations, financial and otherwise to the imperial headquarters. I am still imperial wizard. The other officials still retain their titles, although, of course, the functions of all of us are suspended. We have authority to meet and reincarnate at any time."

Klan Burns Fiery Cross at Divine Estate in Jersey

Afro American — Baltimore, Md.



3-11-44

3-11-44

Ku Klux Klansmen on Wednesday night stoned the windows of this 30-room house on the former Grove estate at Riverton, N.J., recently purchased by followers of Father Divine, and burned three crosses, one of which is shown at right. Divinites are law-abiding folks, but if the Ku Kluxers are looking for trouble they will probably get it.

Says Gov. Green Was Ku Kluxer

CHICAGO, Nov. 5. — Lloyd C Moody, prominent Chicago attorney and candidate for Republican nomination as attorney general in the April primaries, today charged that Gov. Dwight H. Green, running for reelection against Thomas Courtney, "openly boasted" of and had shown him "his memberssip card in the Ku Klux Klan."

Moody was a colleague of Gov Green when both worked as attorneys for the United States government between 1929 and 1935. Moody was a trial lawyer, Green in a clerical position.

Moody said "Gov. Green stated to me that when the crisis came and racial and religious disorders came into the open that he wanted to be on the top," adding that Green stated that "should he ever become successful in politics he would surround himself with Ku Klux Klan members and others whom he could dupe or use to the end that Jews, Negroes and Catholics would cease to be a menace in America.

"Ask Gov. Green," he said, "if he did not on several occasions show me, then his colleague, his Ku Klux Klan membership card, and expressly if this were not true while we were at a Berghoff restaurant in Chicago in the spring of 1935."

Moody challenged his colleague, Gov. Green, "to take the lie detector test in his $100,000 mobile crime laboratory, the same to be operated by a competent, non-political person in the presence of any agreed member of Jewish, Negro, Catholic and Protestant clergy, so that the world may know the reactions of our governor at the time of questioning."

Ku Klux Klan Lies Dormant Until End Of War, To Renew Activities; Revolt In Ranks

Age — New York, N.Y.

10-28-44

By BERNICE SCARR

The forces of reaction, supercharged by the uncanny organization of the Ku Klux Klan, reported to be disbanded, are lying in wait for the war's end, ready to set into operation a well coordinated plan not only to rob the Negro of his vote but of his job, according to Stetson Kennedy, author of the forthcoming book, "The Four Freedoms Down South." The early phase of their program has already begun.

Imperial Wizard James A. Colescott, in answer to a query by Kennedy, said himself, "The Klan did not dissolve nor has it assumed any new name." 10-28-44

While the order's constitutional laws were suspended and the charter of local clans revoked, the Wizard emphasized, "This does not mean that the Klan is dead. We have authority to meet and reincarnate at any time."

The pretense of disbanding which the Klan has used is the same kind of trickery which it practised in 1896 when the Klan's first Wizard, Nathan Bedford Forrest, fearful of Federal prosecution for treason, issued an edict abolishing the Klan "forever." Instead of obeying the edict, the local dens grew more violent, some of them assuming new names such as "The Pale Faces," the "Whilte Brotherhood" and the "Knights of the White Camelia."

Kennedy warns that Colescott, the current Wizard, plans to ape the work of Wizard William Joseph Simmons, who in 1915 reincarnated the dormant Klan until it reached a memership of 5,100,000, and then capitalized upon Post-World-War frictions. 10-28-44

The record of the Klan since 1932, when Colescott succeded Hiram K. Evans as Imperial Wizard, has been one of deceitful hypocrisy. "While professing opposition to all forms of intimidation, Colescott has sanctioned Klan parade through Negro districts, the publicaion of 'want ads' for Klansmen ('There is Work To Do.') and the distribution of intimidatory leaflets ('The KKK Is Watching You!) on the eve of NLRB elections, etc.

Revolt Within KKK

"For some time, however, there have been unmistakable signs of restiveness within the Invisible Empire against Colescott's mild form of restraint, with the wizard himself admitting that state kleagles have accused him of 'selling out to the Jews.' Most ominously, Nightshirt Charlie Speer, former Michigan kleagle, has led Detroit Klansmen out of the Invisible Empire and into more terroristic United Sons of America; while in Atlanta, the recently organized Fact Finders have verbally attacked both Negroes and Jews, and charged the Klan with 'laying down on the job'," Kennedy reports. 10-28-4

"Moreover, the warnings by some Southern governors and Congressmen that 'ways and means' will be found to keep the Democratic Party lily-white in the South (despite the Supreme Court decision admitting Negroes to Texas Democratic primaries) are further evidence of the powerful forces impelling Klansmen to unlawful violence," he adds.

The determination to suppress the Negro political voice was reiterated several days ago by Louisiana's Senator Overton, nominee for the senate of the Democratic Party. He assured apprehensive white voters in his recent speech that "legal measures will eventually bar the Negro from voting in Democratic white primaries in the south." 10-28-44

The future of white supremacy is being closely guarded by such men as John H. Bankhead of Alabama who, in his endorsement of the reelection of Lister Hill to the Senate, says in doubtful praise, "He has the Southerner's attitude on people, ESPECIALLY WHITE SUPREMACY." 10-28-44

Whites Take Jobs Of Negroes

10-28-44

And in the meantime, Negroes are not only being divested of their political rights, but they are being turned out of their jobs, as white labor becomes more plentiful. In Memphis' largest department store, eight Negro women, elevator operators, have been given notice that their services would no longer be needed while on the same day, the store inserted an advertisement seeking white operators and offernig them $18 weekly when the Negro women had only been paid $12.

And even the Negro who keeps his job is threatened by the long arm of the reactionary conspiracy. In Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 49 Negroes were arrested and fined without proper trial in a so-called attempt to discourage idleness, yet an investigation by the Workers Defense League proved that about half the Negroes arrested were regularly employed as stevedores at Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale's harbor. 10-28-44

Rev. Aronn S. Gilmartin of New York, national chairman of the Workers Defense League said, the enforced labor decree "seems to be part of a general attempt to have Negroes continue working at the same menial tasks they had before the war"—if they are to be allowed to work at all.

34-1944

The Ku Klux Klan

Advertiser Aug. 2, 1921. Montg, Ala.

The Ku Klux Klan is said to be reorganizing in Emporia. It is an organization of cowards. Not a man in it has the courage of his convictions. It ~~is an~~ organization of traitors to American institutions. 2-1-44

Not a man in it has faith enough in American courts, American laws and American executive officers to trust them to maintain law and order, and it is an organization of lazy butterfingers in politics, or it would get out at the primary and the election and clean up the incompetent officials who its members think are neglecting to enforce the law.

Ku Klux Stirs In Georgia

Advertiser-Montgomery, Ala. 1-4-44

By RALPH McGILL
In Atlanta Constitution

It was possible to get another sort of post-war picture out of the turkey dinner which the Porterdale Ku Klux Klan gave with former Governor Eugene Talmadge, State Treasurer George Hamilton, former Game and Fish Commissioner Zack Cravey and Burly Johnny Goodwin, Talmadge bodyguard, as the honor guests.

It was a little odd to see George Hamilton listed as an honor guest and as one of the chief speakers of the evening because never before has he been publicly identified with any anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish or anti-foreign born organization. The others were in their usual groove.

There are not many Catholics in Georgia, which is a pity in a way, because they are almost invariably good Christians, good citizens and worthwhile members of a community, something which it never has been possible to say for all the members of the various Ku Klux Klan klaverns of the State. Most of them vote, too.

There are not many Jews in Georgia, either, but they, too, are good citizens. Their contribution is one of decency and hard work.

They vote too.

There also are about 5,000 members of the Greek community in Atlanta alone and they, like the Catholics and Jews, have been buying war bonds and sending their sons off to fight. I do not know any better Americans than the Greek-born citizens we have. They work hard, pay their debts and attend to their own business. They don't hate any other group.

They also vote. 1-4-44

There are a great many Syrians in our midst, too, and while I do not know them as well as I do my Greek friends, they are preferable to such klansmen as were convicted for beating and whipping helpless persons.

I think there are some other foreign-born people in our State who are making a decent, honest contribution.

There is no reason to have an organization formed to promote hate and antagonism toward Catholics, Jews, foreign-born citizens or any other minority group.

The Ku Klux Klan may protest that it now is a reformed organization, but if you could see one of their rituals or sit in on a klavern meeting you would find the same old klan. If you could get through the mumbo-jumbo business of the kleagles, cyclops, knight-nawks and all that clap-trap, you would find it still to be silly, un-Christian and dangerous to the peace and dignity of the people.

It is very un-American because this country stands as a land of opportunity for all peoples and our Constitution so states. So, the Ku Klux Klan is un-American in conception. It often has been so in operation.

Well, as I was saying, it was no surprise to find any of the honor guests there save Mr. Hamilton, who never before, in so far as the public knows, has identified himself with the kluxers.

Maybe he wanted to see if, after all, the men behind those sheets were just men with Halitosis, big adam's apples or double chins or big stomachs or skinny ones and not great, mysterious figures.

One wonders, in passing, if Johnny Goodwin's vigilantes have had to join ranks with the kluxers, or if they were both working the same side of the street and just happened to meet. 1-4-44

Still, that isn't important. Neither is the klan.

That is, it isn't important if the country doesn't come on evil days, as the Catholic-hating, anti-Jewish, anti-foreign-born Klan hopes it will.

You get that from Mr. Talmadge's speech. He didn't believe there would be a prosperous time after the war. He went on to say we shouldn't trade with other nations, but should make them pay through the nose.

He was anti-Cordell Hull. He was very vicious about the tall Tennessean.

He couldn't have been attacking anyone else but Jews and Catholics when he said the problem of the country would be very grave because of all the "refugees" who have been allowed to enter this country.

He knows, being an informed person, that only about 500 Jews have come to Georgia since 1933. He knows, too, that not more than 15,000 Jews have come to this country since the war began. Some were here temporarily.

I would not have the people outside Georgia think this means there is a revival of the Ku Klux Klan in Georgia. It still will be safe to travel through our State. You will not be flogged or frightened by men in bedsheets. Most of the members look better under hoods, as far as that goes. There are just a few klaverns, kleagles, konklyaves, knight-hawks, klucks, kilgraps, killer-dillers, and the like. For the most part they exist in small towns where there isn't anything else to join or where some mill owner finances it as anti-union organization.

Now and then they will prostitute the cross of Christ by leaving it blazing beside some poor helpless person they, in their cowardly might, have flogged, but that is done by the criminal element. Some of those were put in jail a few years back. Mr. Talmadge pardoned them. 1-4-44

This thing will be quite unimportant unless we have a depressed condition after this war, such as we had in the 1920s. Which is why we must have better planning than we had in 1918-19. And more Christian democracy—not Kluxer Khristianity. There is a difference.

Colescott on Trial On KKK Charges

PM - New York, N.Y. 2-16-44

Imperial Wizard James A. Colescott, of Atlanta, and four other alleged Ku Klux Klan leaders went on trial at Pittsburgh charged with conspiring to revive the nightshirt organization in 1941. 2-16-44

The Commonwealth charged that the Klan, camouflaged as the "Keystone Patriotic Society" held a meeting in Pittsburgh and conspired to mislead the public; that Colescott, in a speech, described the Klan as an organization advocating the greater well-being of "Protestant, Gentile, white, native-born Americans."

Film Front

Daily Worker-New York, N.Y.

By DAVID PLATT

3-2-44

IN THE summer of 1941, a few months before Pearl Harbor, an isolationist Senate Committee headed by Wheeler, Nye and D. Worth Clark conducted a witch-hunt against the motion picture industry. The charge was producing anti-fascist films. The investigation was ordered to find out why Hollywood was not producing pictures "depicting the savagery and brutality of Russia." "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," "Underground" and "Escape" were among the anti-Nazi films brought up by the Committee as representing a dangerous trend in the country. The anti-Semitic utterances of Gerald Nye during the course of this inquisition shocked the country. Nye outdid Goebbels in spouting lies about Hollywood being "Jewish-controlled." A Daily Worker editorial at the time called the Senate investigation "the most daring political effort to destroy the unity of the United States since the racial incitements of the Know-Nothing Hooligans and the Ku Klux Klan."

CREDIT GOES TO CHARLES M. LAFOLLETTE, liberal Representative from Indiana, for his vigorous stand against any tie-up between the Indiana Republican Party and remnants of the Ku Klux Klan, once a powerful factor in state politics. In demanding the resignation of Robert M. Lyons, former state treasurer of the Klan, from his post of national committeeman, LaFollette said that he was "opposed to the domination of the Republican Party by anyone who has made a profit out of peddling racial and religious intolerance." Popular protest backed LaFollette, and Lyons resigned. Something more added to the good record of an excellent Congressman.

That organization [the Ku Klux Klan] is not anti-Catholic, anti-Jew or anti-Negro. In fact it is not anti-anything. It is pro-Protestant, pro-white and pro-Gentile. — *The Rev. William E. Thompson, former Kleagle, as quoted in The St. Paul Dispatch.*

Why do I bring this old matter up at this time? Only because the other day it was revealed that the Ku Klux Klan was the brains behind that movie inquisition and that the members of the Senate investigating committee were former Klansmen. These facts came to light for the first time during the trial in Pittsburgh of James A. Colescott, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan on conspiratorial charges brought by the State of Pennsylvania. A State Police Sergeant who had attended meetings of the Klan testified that the Imperial Wizard took credit for the Klan as the organization responsible for the movie investigation.

In his testimony the police officer said: "He (Colescott) went into the subject of the movie industry and said that the names of the Senate Committee investigating the industry would be found to be similar to if not the same as former Klansmen." To think that these men are still in the Senate doing the bidding of this fascist group. The Imperial Wizard and four other Pennsylvania Ku Kluxers were freed because the state had failed to make its conspiracy charge stick. It will not always be so. Some day the charges against the Klan and its rooters in Congress will stick and with this smelly garbage gone the nation will breathe a little easier.

Penna. Opens Trial Of KKK Leaders

Daily Worker-New York, N.Y. 2-16-44

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 15 (UP).—Imperial Wizard James A. Colescott of Atlanta, Ga., and four other Ku Klux Klan leaders went on trial today on a charge of conspiracy in connection with attempts to revive the Klan here in 1941.

Besides Colescott, the defendants were Samuel G. Stauch of Philadelphia, Imperial Kludd; the KKK, camouflaged as the "Keystone Patriotic Society," held a meeting here in 1941 and conspired to mislead the public.

Frank S. Fite, Philadelphia, Statestone Organizer; John V. Waite, Philadelphia, Allegheny County (Pittsbugh) Kleagle, and Walter H. Klinzing, Pittsburgh, local officer. 2-16-44

The Commonwealth charged that

KKK 'Mantle Clubs' Sink Roots in Detroit War Plants

Hooded Klansmen are pictured in this night scene.

By JOHN MELDON

DETROIT.—A few days ago, a Negro was found badly beaten and unconscious outside the employment offices of the Timken Axle plant here. When two white men brought him to and got him to a drugstore, they asked him who did it. "The Mantle Club," the Negro muttered, and refused to talk further about the incident.

You will be hearing more about the Mantle Clubs. In Detroit, these clubs are hand-picked groups of sluggers organized by the allegedly defunct Ku Klux Klan. The clubs have sunk deep poisonous roots in virtually every big war plant in this area and they have begun to spread throughout the country. If U. S. Attorney General Francis Biddle is interested, and he certainly should be, he will find that this revised version of the hated Klan has built up a big organization in one of the key war plants of the east—at Lynn, Massachusetts, in the huge General Electric plant.

CHANGE OF NAME

Here in Detroit, the Klan has never given up the ghost although it "officially" disbanded early in 1943. It simply changed its name to several offshoot organizations, such as the United Sons of America and the United Sons of Michigan, as well as the Mantle Clubs.

The Mantle Clubs are a modern stream-lined replica of their founding fathers, the Kluxers, but they still retain the old ritual and the passwords to meetings. All members are oath-bound. The term "mantle" was adopted in homage to the old Klan practice of wearing hoods and cloaks. However, Mantle Club members have abandoned the hood and cloak.

Chief strength of the clubs here are in the Timken, Packard and Hudson plants. Their chief activities are confined for the moment to vicious anti-Negro and anti-Semitic propaganda in the plants and in their neighborhoods.

In Detroit the Mantle Clubs seek membership from among the newly-arrived southern workers and have intimate ties with many of the "hell fire" preachers of the Fundamentalist Baptist churches. There is a strong element of racket in the outfit. The initiation fee is high, and in the east, in Lynn, the fee is $20. Club membership is limited strictly to males.

Rigid discipline is enforced. No member is allowed to talk about the Mantle Clubs in the presence of outsiders. At local club meetings members submit lists of names of prospective members who, in turn, are quietly approached and sounded out.

The Eastern Clubs, especially up in New England, have reached the point of discussing the Mantle Clubs' ultimate aim, that of eventually "taking over the government peacefully." Anti-unionism is drilled into the members (all work in war plants where there are CIO unions, such as the UE and UAW) in the form of "freedoms"—for instance, the right to "bargain freely" without "interference from trade unions." 5-21-44

The Mantle Clubs are the Klan in a new dress. There can be no question as to the purpose and aims of these outfits which have selected some of the most important war plants in the nation to take root; they are pro-fascist and potentially powerful weapons which will be used by reactionary employers who intend to detour America from the path of Teheran, to the path of the Hoover days of class conflict and union smashing.

As we said earlier in this article, if the government is interested, it will not only talk to Messrs. Maxie, Cole and Long. It will also seek out one Charles E. Spare, who perhaps knows more about the Klan's Mantle Clubs than anyone. Mr. Spare can be found in the Detroit City Directory under the listing of "Detective Agencies." He operates a labor-spy agency and he's the big-shot in this national center of the revived Klan. His home address is 885 Gladstone St.

Ku Klux Klan disbands as national body

Tribune
Los Angeles, Calif.
6-19-44

ATLANTA—The hooded order, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, has disbanded as a national organization, the Atlanta Journal reported in a copyrighted Sunday story.

The Imperial Wizard, J. A. Colescott, was quoted as saying the reason for disbandment had been approved by all members, and he added, "I do not regard it as a subject for discussion outside the Klan." 6-19-44

Colescott told the Journal, "This does not mean that the Klan is dead. We simply have released local chapters from all obligations, financial and otherwise, to the imperial headquarters."

The Klan Could Ride Again

Courier-Journal
Louisville, Ky. 6-10-44

Reports from Atlanta that headquarters of the once-dreaded Ku Klux Klan are vacant, that its Imperial Wizard has departed, and that formal motion to disband was approved by what remained of the membership are a curious footnote to the story told by recent Southern elections. Candidates in these campaigns had made a deliberate effort to revive racial prejudice as a political issue, to reawaken the doubts, fears and insecurities that fostered the rebirth of the Klan in the uncertain years of deflation just after the Armistice of 1918. In every instance these candidates were defeated, by predominantly white electorates, and the present stigma attaching to the Klan and its membership is graphically illustrated by the furor now agitating Indiana Republicans over young Congressman LaFollette's demand that the state's national committeeman resign his post because of former Klan affiliations.

The Klan was, as the late W. J. Cash in his brilliant book *The Mind of the South* has pointed out, the direct offspring of ancient fears and new economic insecurities.

"The Klan summed up within itself," he wrote, "with precise completeness and extributed in part to the temporary security actness, the whole body of the fears and which has at once brought jobs and high hates of the time, including, of course, those farm prices to the South and attracted away which were shared with the rest of America much of its under-employed population surand the Western world. That is why, some-plus. But its ending also must be credited what modified for the purpose . . . it even-in some measure to the education in economically spread far beyond the borders of nomics which 12 years of the New Deal and Dixie."

25 years of learning the truth about our And the decline of the Klan, as with the place in the world, have forced upon the decline in the pressure of prejudice, coin-American people. In so far as this na-cided with the gradual abatement of fear tion's understanding of economic cause and It reigned high during the early and mid-effect, of the interdependence of nations Twenties. It subsided during the brief boom and men upon each other were concerned, years when the cotton planter and the small this people in 1920 were so many children merchant who had contributed so much to in a wilderness. In those days there was its intimidating strength, enjoyed a tem-a deadly and attractive simplicity in blamporary prosperity and it flared into power ing the sudden dearth of jobs, the crash again when legal protection brought union farm prices, upon the machinations of Ne-organizers south. 6-10-44 groes, Catholics, Jews, foreigners. There

The death of the Klan now may be at-was an obscure consolation in the thought that the spirit of the Klan is not actually dead. Such a spirit, rooted in the still-strong impulse to evil in mankind, is hard to kill, is capable of springing full-fledged into vitality again, given the necessary stimulus. It remains to be seen whether mankind, now contemplating the bloody chaos of its own making, will permit itself again to fall back into the state of mind and stagnation of soul in which organizations such as the Klan may find it fatally easy to reincarnate.

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The Worker
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5-21-44

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ATLANTA—The hooded order, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, has disbanded as a national organization, the Atlanta Journal reported in a copyrighted Sunday story.

The Imperial Wizard, J. A. Colescott, was quoted as saying the reason for disbandment had been approved by all members, and he added, "I do not regard it as a subject for discussion outside the Klan." 6-19-44

Colescott told the Journal, "This does not mean that the Klan is dead. We simply have released local chapters from all obligations, financial and otherwise, to the imperial headquarters."

The Klan Could Ride Again

Courier-Journal
Louisville, Ky. 6-10-44

Reports from Atlanta that headquarters of the once-dreaded Ku Klux Klan are vacant, that its Imperial Wizard has departed, and that formal motion to disband was approved by what remained of the membership are a curious footnote to the story told by recent Southern elections. Candidates in these campaigns had made a deliberate effort to revive racial prejudice as a political issue, to reawaken the doubts, fears and insecurities that fostered the rebirth of the Klan in the uncertain years of deflation just after the Armistice of 1918. In every instance these candidates were defeated, by predominantly white electorates, and the present stigma attaching to the Klan and its membership is graphically illustrated by the furor now agitating Indiana Republicans over young Congressman LaFollette's demand that the state's national committeeman resign his post because of former Klan affiliations.

The Klan was, as the late W. J. Cash in his brilliant book *The Mind of the South* has pointed out, the direct offspring of ancient fears and new economic insecurities.

"The Klan summed up within itself," he wrote, "with precise completeness and exactness, the whole body of the fears and hates of the time, including, of course, those which were shared with the rest of America and the Western world. That is why, somewhat modified for the purpose . . . it eventually spread far beyond the borders of Dixie."

And the decline of the Klan, as with the decline in the pressure of prejudice, coincided with the gradual abatement of fear. It reigned high during the early and mid-Twenties. It subsided during the brief boom years when the cotton planter and the small merchant who had contributed so much to its intimidating strength, enjoyed a temporary prosperity and it flared into power again when legal protection brought union organizers south. 6-10-44

of the Klan now may be attributed in part to the temporary security which has at once brought jobs and high farm prices to the South and attracted away much of its under-employed population surplus. But its ending also must be credited in some measure to the education in economics which 12 years of the New Deal and 25 years of learning the truth about our place in the world, have forced upon the American people. In so far as this nation's understanding of economic cause and effect, of the interdependence of nations and men upon each other were concerned, this people in 1920 were so many children in a wilderness. In those days there was a deadly and attractive simplicity in blaming the sudden dearth of jobs, the crash in farm prices, upon the machinations of Negroes, Catholics, Jews, foreigners. There was an obscure consolation in the thought that these inimical forces which, after a brief prosperity had plunged the South and to a lesser degree the rest of the nation back into poverty and confusion, might be exorcised by torchlight parades, by the assertion of authority, by brutalities directed against individuals who personified malign influences. 6-10-44

But the South and the world have come a long way since those days. We have learned to look behind joblessness for its causes, to see the farmer's plight in relation to the nation's well-being, to see our role in the world as one dependent upon the price of cotton or the failure of a bank in towns a hemisphere away. It is difficult for the crude, burning malice of the Klan spirit to stay alight in a world where the brotherhood of man has left the realm of pulpit abstractions and become a practical and businesslike reality. It is true, of course, as the Imperial Wizard pointed out, that the spirit of the Klan is not actually dead. Such a spirit, rooted in the still-strong impulse to evil in mankind, is hard to kill, is capable of springing full-fledged into vitality again, given the necessary stimulus. It remains to be seen whether mankind, now contemplating the bloody chaos of its own making, will permit itself again to fall back into the state of mind and stagnation of soul in which organizations such as the Klan may find it fatally easy to reincarnate.